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HOUSEKEEPERS' CHAT

Thursday, September 29, 1932.

(FOR BROADCAST USE ONLY)

Subject: "Buying Canned Foods." Information from the Bureau of Home Economics and the Bureau of Agricultural Economics, U.S.D.A.

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Times change and jobs change with them, even jobs like housekeeping. In the days of our grandmothers the successful housewife was the one who made the best bread or the finest jelly, who was skilled in sewing, knitting, quilting, soap-making and so on. In a word, the best homemaker produced the best goods for her family's use - she was a producer or manufacturer and her home was really a producing center.

But the situation has changed with the years. Homes today aren't the producing centers they used to be. The bread, the jelly, the soap, the sweaters, the quilts and so on come largely from outside the home. And the housewife buys instead of making them. According to the statistics, women do nine-tenths of the retail buying in the United States. Nine-tenths is a big percent. The successful housewife today needs to be a specialist in buying. She needs to know qualities in the goods she buys. She needs to know when a bargain is a bargain and how to get value for her money. And that takes knowledge and intelligence. But every bit of information she can pick up on this matter of wise purchasing is so much to the good for her and her family.

One of the safest and surest ways to purchase is by specification, as the United States Government and many other large business concerns buy their supplies. You've probably often heard this plan of buying suggested for household goods. Many people have been considering the possibilities of setting up standards for different sorts of goods and of having the articles on sale in the stores plainly marked according to these standards.

This idea is making more rapid headway in the foods industries than in most others. For example, standard grading for meats is a development of recent years. Some of the meat packers in cooperation with the U. S. Bureau of Agricultural Economics set up these standards. Then, a new idea that is making progress just now is standard grading for canned fruits and vegetables and labeling the commercial products to show which grade they belong in.

We consumers will certainly be glad to have canned goods labeled according to quality. Of course, all canned food put up commercially for sale in this country is wholesome. The Food and Drugs Administration with the cooperation of the canners sees to that.

But a lot of us women want something more than the assurance that the canned goods we buy are safe and wholesome. We may want flavor and high quality, especially, and sometimes something fancy and different. If we're having company to dinner, say, and want to serve something fancy, we want to know what grade of



canned food we can ask the groceryman for. And now and then we don't mind paying a premium for this top-notch grade. Then, when we want just a good medium grade, we'll like to select that and pay for it on an equally definite quality basis.

The Bureau of Agricultural Economics has already set up quality grades for some kinds of canned fruits and vegetables. And here's an explanation from Mr. W.A. Sherman, who is in charge of the fruit and vegetable work of the Bureau, of how the quality grading works for classifying canned tomatoes:

"There are three grades for canned tomatoes," says Mr. Sherman, "at the top is U.S. Grade A, or fancy. Then comes U.S. Grade B, extra standard or choice. The third down the scale, the U.S. Grade C, or standard. Everything below standard or Grade C is substandard. Our pure foods laws now require that substandard canned food carry some statement on the label to indicate its low quality. But that doesn't ever mean that substandard food is unwholesome.

Next, Mr. Sherman explains the difference between the three grades of canned tomatoes called U. S. Grades A, B, and C.

"U.S. Grade A (fancy) tomatoes are select and are canned whole or almost whole. They have a uniformly red color and are practically free from pieces of skin or cores or blemishes. They have the typical flavor of naturally ripened tomatoes and they measure up 90 points on the official card.

"Now Grade B tomatoes are just a little less perfect. And Grade C is just one step below Grade B. The Grade C, or standard, tomatoes need not be whole, but they must be in fairly large pieces and reasonably free from greenish parts and pieces of skin and core. In other words, if you're making scalloped tomatoes, Grade C would answer your purpose perfectly. But if you want some extra nice tomatoes, to serve all by themselves, then you'd probably want Grade A or B.

"You probably noticed that I have sometimes spoken of U.S. Grade A and other times just Grade A. When the U.S. stands before the grade name on the label of a can, you know that the food was put up in a factory under the constant supervision of a government inspector. Of course, many factories are not large enough to afford this service. These canneries may pack foods of the same three grades and label them Grade A, B, or C without the U.S. So whether you see U.S. Grade A or just Grade A on a can, the quality of food inside is the same."

Mr. Sherman believes it is the women buyers themselves who can bring about the time when all consumers may buy canned goods on the basis of quality grades. "Already," he says, "the canners are having their product graded and are selling thousands of cases of canned foods to wholesalers on the basis of these grades.

"The distributors who put the labels on these cans will add a line showing the grade, when they think you really want this information and will pay a premium for the higher grades. So, if you're interested, tell your groceryman. And if you have the chance, pass the word straight to canning companies and wholesalers of canned goods. The Department of Agriculture stands ready to co-operate with all operators of canning factories who want to put the grade of





their goods on the label."

Many housekeepers trying to buy economically and intelligently have trouble deciding what size can to buy. They wonder how many cups or how many ounces in that can of tomatoes or beans. If you have a pencil handy, I'll give you some facts to answer these questions. You may find it handy to have these facts down in your notebook until you know them like the multiplication table.

All right. Pencils ready?

The No. 1/4 can contains a half cup or from 4 to 4 and 1/2 ounces.  
The No. 1/2 can contains one cup or 7 and 1/2 to 8 ounces.  
The No. 1 short can contains 1 and 3/4 cups or 10 and 1/2 to 13 ounces.  
The No. 1 tall can contains 2 cups or one pound.  
The No. 2 can contains 2 and 1/2 to 3 cups or 1 pound, 4 ounces.  
The No. 2 and 1/2 can contains 3 and 1/2 cups or 1 pound, 14 ounces.  
The No. 3 can contains 4 cups or 2 pounds, 4 ounces.  
The No. 10 can contains 14 cups.

A friend of mine, who has a lot of thrifty housekeeping ideas, suggested a few points about buying canned goods the other day. She says that she saves both time and money by buying sliced, cubed, broken or crushed fruit when she is going to make fruit cups, cocktails or frozen desserts. When she is serving the fruit by itself, of course, she used the more expensive fancy or choice grades. She carries this same idea out when she buys canned peas or canned tomatoes. She buys the less expensive or standard grade vegetables when she is making soups, stews, sauces or chowders and uses the choice or fancy grades only when she is serving these canned vegetables plain or creamed or buttered as main course vegetables. The grade of canned food she buys, she says, depends always on how she's going to use it.

Tomorrow, I have a fine recipe for grape pie to give you and a Sunday menu featuring this pie. Also I'll answer some of your questions about pickles.

